

Remarks

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Claims 9-15 were allowed, claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 17 and 20 were rejected, and claims 3, 5-7, 18 and 19 were objected to. By this Amendment, claims 1, 6, 7 and 16 have been amended. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 20 was rejected under § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 16 has been amended to provide antecedent basis for “the second fuel/air ratio value” as recited in claim 20. Consequently, this rejection is believed to be cured.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 8 and 16 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,818,116 issued to Nakae et al. (hereinafter “Nakae ‘116”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,584,962 issued to Nonomura et al. (hereinafter “Nonomura ‘962”). Claims 1 and 16 have been amended to recite the step of “calculating a target fuel/air ratio value based on first and second fuel/air ratio values.” Neither Nakae ‘116 nor Nonomura ‘962, either alone or in any combination, discloses or remotely suggests the step of calculating a target fuel/air ratio value based on first and second fuel/air ratio values. Consequently, the rejection of claims 1 and 16 is believed to be overcome. Since claim 8 depends on claim 1, the rejection of claim 8 is believed to be overcome for the same reasons.

Claims 2 and 17 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakae ‘116 in view of Nonomura ‘962, and further in view of either of U.S. Patent No. 6,769,400 issued to Ament (hereinafter “Ament ‘400”) or U.S. Patent No. 6,796,239 issued to Bayerle et al. (hereinafter “Bayerle ‘239”). Claim 2 depends on claim 1. Claim 17 depends on claim 16. Consequently, the rejection of these claims is believed to be overcome for the reasons previously discussed.

Claims 1, 4, 8 and 16 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,274,943 issued to Hasegawa et al. (hereinafter "Hasegawa '943") in view of Nonomura '962. Claims 1 and 16 have been amended to recite the step of "calculating a target fuel/air ratio value based on first and second fuel/air ratio values." Neither Hasegawa '943 nor Nonomura '962, either alone or in any combination, discloses or remotely suggests the step of calculating a target fuel/air ratio value based on first and second fuel/air ratio values. Consequently, the rejection of claims 1 and 16 is believed to be overcome. Since claims 4 and 8 depend on claim 1, the rejection of these claims is believed to be overcome for the same reasons.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to the Examiner's objections and rejections in advancing the prosecution of this case. Applicants believe all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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